

SYNOPSIS OF GOM ALLIANCE REGIONAL RESTORATION COORDINATION  
TEAM STATE-LED WORKSHOP, DAPHNE, ALABAMA  
MARCH 6-9, 2007

March 6, Day 1 – Alabama Issues

- Guest speakers discussed a range of topics relevant to coastal Alabama restoration activities, including coastal geology, habitat status and trends, and storm impacts.
- Lunch presentation on the AL/MS Restoration Data Base
- Additional presentations in the afternoon including oyster reef status and trends, wetland and SAV in coastal Alabama, mitigation issues and riparian rights on oyster leases, the post-Katrina fish and shellfish nursery habitat restoration program, the Forever Wild Program, and the Corps of Engineers' 204 program.

March 7, Day 2 – Mississippi Issues

- Guest speakers discussed numerous issues including distribution, status and trends of sea grasses, Mississippi oyster restoration efforts, the MS Coastal Improvement Program, MS coastal preserves, research-based stewardship and restoration. Other topics included the long-term comprehensive master plan for beneficial use along coastal Mississippi, and the Deer Island Tidal Marsh restoration.

Phil Bass provided an update on the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. In May or early June, Governor Barbour will invite the Federal leadership and the other four Governors to meet to focus on the Alliance. Following that, the next phase of the Governors' Action Plan will begin.

The RRCT needs to think about what it needs that the Alliance Management Team can help with.

The RRCT needs more support from the State Leads.

Mr. Bass urged the RRCT members to get the word out on the work of the Alliance through newsletters and other information/media sources.

NOTE: Individual Power Point presentations are posted on the work group website at <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/restoration/welcome.html>.

### Action Items or Recommendations from Days 1 and 2

- RRCT may want to seek information on the affect increased ship traffic and ship size may have on increases in erosion.
- RRCT needs to determine which of the various available databases best meets its needs and how to keep database information current.
- RRCT should be looking at conservation as well as restoration regulatory issues. Another GOM Alliance team is working on legal/regulatory issues, and perhaps RRCT should invite them to the Galveston meeting to discuss this issue.
- RRCT should further discuss monies available for restoration, i.e., CIAP monies, GOMESA, etc., geared to long-term restoration activities.
- There are some long-term activities on-going in some of the States. RRCT or Habitat ID group needs to compile information that The Nature Conservancy and others have so that a vision and plan of action can be developed.
- RRCT needs to discuss and determine what really needs to be kept and to what level to restore to.
- RRCT needs to interact with the SARP group—perhaps the Alliance could come up with a coastal plan for restoration for the Gulf Coast that could be part of the SARP (Southwest Aquatic Resource Program).

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### March 8—Implementing the Governor's Action Plan

- Reviewed R1 and R2 actions and responsibilities that are assigned to the RRCT.
- R1—Need to include Mexico
- R1-1—Accomplished.
- R1-2 – On-going. The Contributor section should include all those participating in these meetings. Collaborator section needs to capture everyone that is involved. An **action item** should be to include all of the States and Mexico as contributors and collaborators.

After the initial round-robin of State meetings, need to formulate a

framework for continuation. Should be added to Key Next Steps.

Need to add some words about information exchange among the States.

We should add the next two meetings about the States—May 22-24 in Galveston, Texas, and tentatively week of August 20 in St. Petersburg, FL.

- R1-3—State of Texas has been given a contract to perform this action. RRCT needs to develop goals to come out of the workshop that Texas will host on freshwater inflows. **Action item** for next State. Reps. conference call is to discuss the issue further. Woody Woodrow will let Kris Benson know if there is need to dedicate a call to the specific issue. States may want to set up a separate committee of people more familiar with the topic.

Under R1-3 on matrix, move USGS over to Collaborator and put Texas in as the lead. Contributors are EPA and Florida.

**Action item**—get State Leads to smooth way for out-of-state travel for these meetings.

- R1-4—RRCT needs to look at what the environmental issues are that affect habitat conservation. Need to look at the original white paper and comments from earlier workshops.

One issue is inconsistent application of existing regulations. Involves regulatory issues that affect restoration. Need further discussion on nationwide permitting regulations and need to make recommendations as part of our assigned task. State Reps. need to work on this.

One recommendation or solution would be better communication among agencies. Possible recommendation--to use a formal structure for inter-agency cooperation in the permitting process.

RRCT felt that items 4, 5, and 6 need additional discussions about how each State works, to identify problems, and to bring out what does not work. Deliverable would be to develop a list of issues and potential solutions. Following that, next step might be to meet with the Corps of Engineers Districts to talk about the issues.

- R1-5—Talks about streamlining, so it is a little different than R1-4 above. States should write individual comments on nationwide regulation. RRCT may be able to make some policy recommendations. Change matrix to eliminate need for State Reps. to meet to talk about streamlining—it can be done on a State Reps. conference call to reword No. 5.

- R1-6—There is inconsistency among reporting requirements for Federal grants. RRCT could list the issues relevant to R1-6 and ask the Federal working group under Ocean Action Plan to address them. RRCT needs to discuss the issues more first.
- R1-7—John Bowie and Quenton Dokken are working to try to get the private sector to join in as a partner. Need is for both money and cooperation. Should get all of the vested interest groups involved.
- R1-8—Larry Parson with USACE is hosting a Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan workshop to work on this issue.
- R1-9—NOAA, through the Coastal Services Center, has put together a lot of NOAA data on population trends, etc. RRCT needs to check for data gaps.
- R2—USGS and NOAA are working on the data side of the community resilience issues. Remote sensing is a major element. The next level will be to create tools that can help restoration project managers in their efforts.

Heidi Recksiek will develop an ad-hoc committee to work on R2. RRCT will keep the issue in its charge, and will help identify the right people in the States to work on this issue. That way, the RRCT can have oversight and ensure that restoration needs are considered.

May want to have the RRCT group and the ad hoc committee meet for a half -day at the Alliance meeting in St. Petersburg in July.

#### March 7 and 8—Gulf of Mexico Regional Sediment Management Master Plan.

A copy of the notes from that meeting is available on the website. The URL for that website is: <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/restoration/welcome.html>.